

# NoMI Flag Football League

## BASIC FLAG FOOTBALL RULES

The most important rule in flag football is **very minimal contact is allowed**, including tackling, diving, blocking, screening or fumbles. **Any contact that creates an advantage, for a player, should be penalized by the officials.** Defenders 'tackle' the ball carrier by removing one or both of an offensive player's flags.

**While this rule is designed to keep players safe, there are several other rules that limit contact among players, including:**

- The player who catches the initial snap is not allowed to run across the line of scrimmage with the ball.
- All forward passes must be caught across the line of scrimmage.
- Unlimited backward passes and pitches are allowed behind the line of scrimmage. The defense can immediately rush across the line of scrimmage, once the ball is pitched or passed backwards. The 7-second pass clock is eliminated once the ball is pitched or passed backwards. The defense can intercept a backwards pass or pitch and advance the ball.
- Center sneak plays aren't allowed.
- There are no fumbles. A backwards pass or fumble that hits the ground will be marked at the yard line the ball hits. A forward fumble will be spotted at the yard line where the fumble occurred.
- The ball is dead when: the ball carrier's knee, leg, shin or arm hits the ground or the ball carrier's flag falls off.

Players can't obstruct or guard their flags.

## SCORING

Every game starts with a coin toss (there are no kickoffs). The starting team begins on its own 5-yard line and has four downs—essentially four plays—to cross midfield for a first down.

If the offense fails to advance after three attempts, they can “punt,” meaning they turn over the ball to the opposing team, which then starts from its own 5-yard line. Or they can go for a first down, but if they fail, the opposing team takes over possession from the spot of the ball.

Once midfield is crossed, the offense has three downs to score a touchdown. A touchdown is 6 points and a safety is 2 points (1-point conversion from the 5-yard line; 2-point conversion from the 10-yard line).

A touchdown is 6 points and a safety is 2 points (1-point conversion from the 5-yard line; 2-point conversion from the 10-yard line). A safety occurs when the ball-carrier is declared down in their own end zone.

League Operators can determine their own specific mercy rule. In tournament play, the game will end when a team is ahead by 28+ points at any time.

## **RUNNING**

When players run with the ball, their feet can't leave the ground to avoid a defensive player. In other words, players can spin to avoid their opponent, but they can't leap or dive.

Direct handoffs and unlimited backward pitches/passes are allowed behind the line of scrimmage. Only 1 forward pass is allowed per play and it must be caught across the line of scrimmage.

The player who catches the snap cannot advance the ball across the line of scrimmage. 1 or 2 designated rushers must be 7 yards from the line of scrimmage to legally rush. No defensive player is ever obligated to rush, across the line of scrimmage, on a given play. Once the offense pitches or throws the ball backwards, all players on defense are eligible to rush the offense.

Flag football rules aim to prevent power plays and avoid short-yardage situations, so you'll find no run zones located 5 yards from each end zone and on either side of the midfield. In this designated area, the offensive team must complete a pass play. The end of any run is determined by where the ball is, when the flag is pulled.

## **RECEIVING**

One rule that makes flag football unique (and that much more competitive) is that everyone can receive a pass, including the quarterback, after the ball has been handed off behind the line of scrimmage. This allows coaches to include a variety of flag football plays into their playbooks and helps players develop fundamental offense skills. Plus, it makes the game more engaging.

Players must have 1 foot or body part inbounds, with possession of the ball, for a legal catch.

## **PASSING**

Any type of a forward pass must be caught across the line of scrimmage. (shovel, underhand, overhand). Quarterbacks have 7 seconds to release the ball; if the ball is

not released, the play is dead and the ball returns to the previous line of scrimmage, next down.

Additionally, center sneak play—where the quarterback hands off to the center as the first handoff of the play—is no longer allowed.

Interceptions on normal scrimmage plays are allowed and can be advanced by the defense. Interceptions on any extra point can also be returned for 2 points.

### **RUSHING THE PASSER**

1 or 2 designated rushers are eligible to rush the offense. Designated rushers must be 7 yards from the line of scrimmage to legally rush and need to keep their hand raised until the ball is snapped. No defensive player is ever obligated to rush across the line of scrimmage on a given play. Once the offense pitches or throws the ball backwards, all players on the defense are eligible to rush the offense.

## **NoMI Flag Football League - Quick League Facts**

### **LEAGUE OVERVIEW**

Non-contact NFL FLAG–based play. 5v5 format. Focus on safety, fun, and equal participation.

### **GAME FORMAT**

Two (2) 20-minute halves with a running clock. The clock stops only for injuries, timeouts, or referee discretion.

### **FIELD & FIRST DOWNS**

60-yard total field: 50 yards of play plus two 5-yard end zones. One first down at midfield. No-Run Zones inside the final 5 yards before each end zone. ROOKIE Division (4-6 age group) has a field HALF this size with offense running one direction.

### **OFFENSE**

All players are eligible receivers. No blocking or screening. There is a 25 second play clock and the QB has 7 seconds to throw. No QB runs past the line of scrimmage. Laterals allowed behind the line of scrimmage only.

### **RUSHING THE PASSER**

Up to two (2) players may rush the passer. Rushers must identify themselves by raising a hand and keeping it raised until the snap. Rushers must be 7 yards from the line of scrimmage at the snap and must rush immediately. No contact with the QB unless incidental. Offensive interference with a rusher's clear path is illegal.

## **DEFENSE**

Players not rushing may defend at the line of scrimmage but may not enter the backfield unless a handoff or backward pitch occurs.

## **FLAG PULLING & BALL PLACEMENT**

No fumbles. When a flag is pulled, the ball is placed where the ball carrier's feet were. If a player falls, the play is dead immediately.

## **OVERTIME (IF NEEDED)**

The winner is determined by most points scored in overtime. Coin flip determines first choice (home team calls). Each team gets one play per round from the 5-yard line (1 point) or 10-yard line (2 points).

- 1st OVERTIME: Each team will get one (1) play from the defense's 5-yard line for one point or the defense's 10-yard line for two points. Each team has the choice to go for 1 or 2 points in the first OVERTIME PERIOD ONLY.

**Example:** Team A starts on offense and chooses to go for one point from the 5-yard line and is successful. Team B is then on offense and can choose to either go for one point from the 5-yard line to tie and force a second round of overtime or to go for two points from the 10-yard line for the win.

- If the second team on offense in an overtime round fails to beat or match the team that went first, the game is over.
- Starting with the 2nd overtime, both teams must attempt a 2 point conversion from the 10-yard line.
- Starting with the 3rd overtime, each team will get 1 play from the 5 yard line going out from the endzone. The team with the most yards will be the winner. The team with the most yards will be awarded 1 point added to their final score.
- The Final Score will be recorded to include all points scored in the overtime periods.
- All regulation period rules and penalties are in effect.
- Interceptions are returnable for a score in OT and are worth 2 points.
- Interceptions returned for a score in the first or second overtime period, the game is over. Interceptions advanced in the third overtime period, the game is over.